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CEREBUS

JAKA'S STORY

16

129
DEC

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Well now *this* is unusual.

It's hour number 30 of my latest effort to rid my life of the pernicious hemp plant (flowertops and leaves a specialty). Ger wasn't feeling well and nipped off home to drool in his pillow, so I finished up the page I was working on (page 2) and then thought 'Now, what? I can't smoke a joint.' So I finished writing up the rest of this issue, doing thumb-nail sketches of the rest of the pages which took about an hour or so and then thought 'Now, what? I can't smoke a joint.' So I took the humungous pile of fan-mail up to Doogie's that came in for the two weeks after 126 shipped and answered every one of them, designating some for the letters page this issue and I only had *two* beers (the stuff tastes like urine or something without a THC appetizer). Took the letters and hand-written answers up to the office and left them on Monique's desk and thought 'Now, what? I can't smoke a joint.' So, I've just arrived home and my head is clear as a bell, so I'm writing this here Note from the President here and shortly I'm going to eat a *little* something (soup and maybe the little finger sandwiches from the care package Mum sent me home with after Christmas) because I haven't got the Munchies for the first time in mumble-mumble years so I really don't *want* a Mars bar and a bag of Bar-b-que potato chips and a half bottle of Cream Soda and a chocolate eclair. After I'm done eating I'm going out to my favourite watering hole and choke back a few more frosty mugs of ice-cold urine (hey, it's only been one day) and then I'm coming straight (no pun intended) home to bed. And you know what? Right now I think I could finish a joint of Jamaican Brain-Death the size of my fore-arm in ONE TOKE!

★★★★★★★★★★

Remember the large paper repackaged edition of *Jaka's Story* I mentioned in 126? You don't? Wonderful. Because we aren't doing them anymore. It was a greedy capitalist swine-piggy snort-snort idea from the word go.

★★★★★★★★★★

And speaking of Paul McCartney, a hearty THANK YOU for a true 'Flower in the Dirt'; 'My Brave Face' two hundred and thirty-six listenings of which have helped me *immeasureably* in making it to within forty-seven hours of the end of a Truly Lonely Holiday Season. Just goes to prove that even a Swine Who'd Sue His Own Mates (and, more *importantly*, Fellow Artists) can still deliver music I like once-in-a-while. Thanks, Paulie.

CEREBUS

NO. 129 DECEMBER 1989

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

MONIQUE KAPTEIN
Administrative Assistant

JAKA'S STORY
a novel

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PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 114)

•

POGROM'S PROGRESS
(Cerebus 115 to Cerebus 119)

•

THE POET
(Cerebus 120 to Cerebus 130)

•

MYSTERY ACHIEVEMENT
(Cerebus 131 to Cerebus 136)

•

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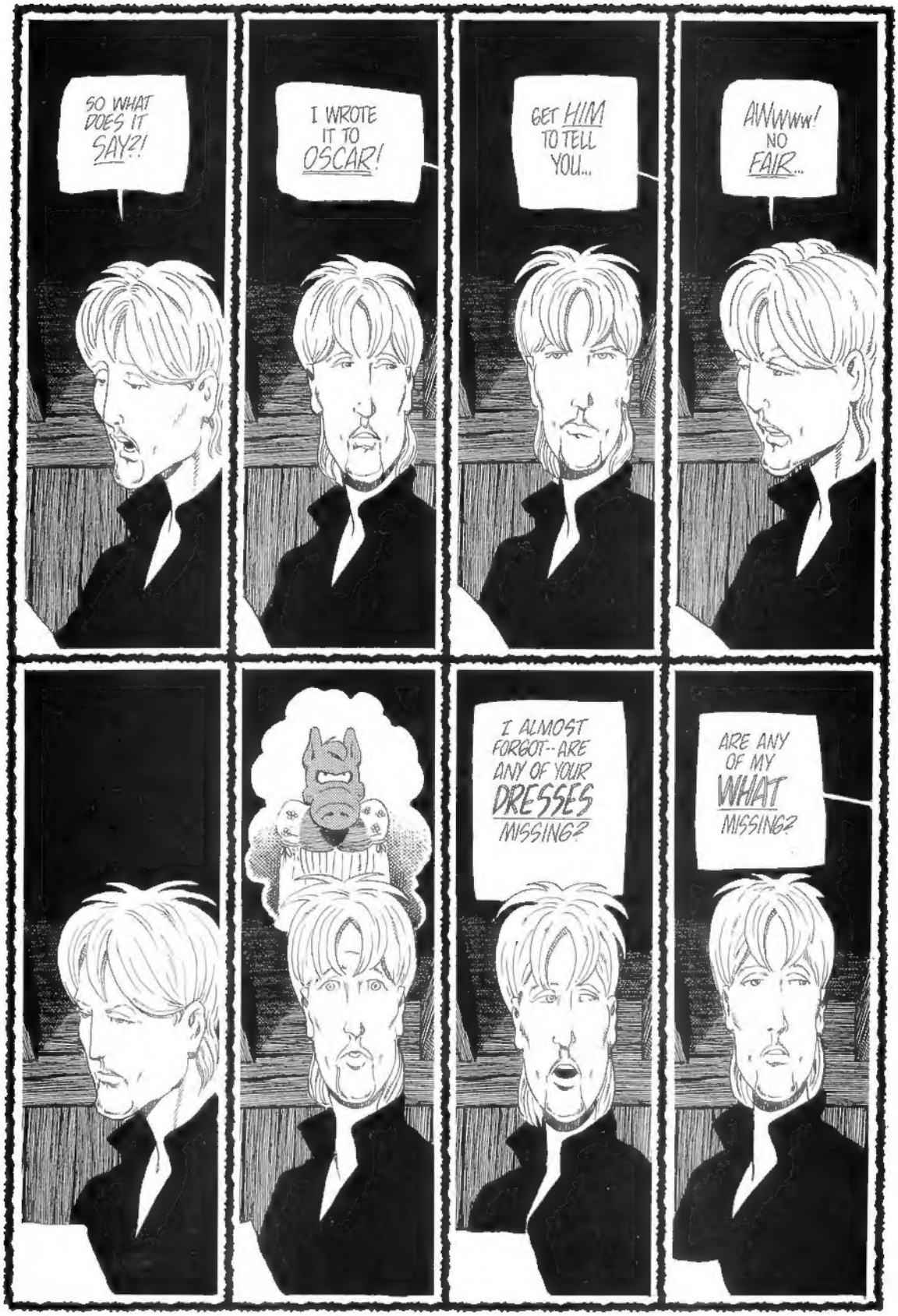
PRINTED IN CANADA

A NOTE?
FROM OSCAR??
FOR ME??
UM HUH
IT'S IN LOWER FELDAN SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT SAYS.
WELL-- THANK YOU FOR TRYING ANYWAY...
OH THAT'S OKAY...
WHAT DOES IT SAY?
HE SURE KNOWS HOW TO LAY IT ON THICK WHEN HE WANTS SOMETHING DOESN'T HE?
WHAT ... DOES IT SAY?
JUST A SECOND
THERE'S A LITTLE MORE SNOW TO WADE THROUGH

AH.
HE WANTS TO KNOW IF I'LL LET HIM WATCH ME DANCE TOMORROW NIGHT...
DID HE ASK YOU TO BRING AN ANSWER BACK TO HIM?
AN ANSWER?
UH
NO.
TYPICAL.
WELL...
MAYBE HE'LL JUST GET AN ANSWER ANYWAY...
WHERE'S THAT GOOD STATIONERY YOUR MOTHER GAVE US FOR A WEDDING PRESENT...?
IN THE KITCHEN DRAWER I THINK

SCRTCH SCRTCH SCRTCHA
SCRTCH SCRTCH
OOOOOH. WHAT'S THE FUTURE PERFECT FOR 'ADMIRE'?
UH.
GOT IT.
SCRTCH SCRTCH SCRTCH
THERE. YOU CAN TAKE THAT TO HIM IN THE MORNING
OKAY.


SO WHAT DOES IT SAY?!
I WROTE IT TO OSCAR!
GET HIM TO TELL YOU...
AWwww! NO FAIR...
I ALMOST FORGOT--ARE ANY OF YOUR DRESSES MISSING?
ARE ANY OF MY WHAT MISSING?

HAVING ASSERTED dominion over Nurse, Jaka came to regard the domestic as little more than another of the suite's many furnishings; a kind of period piece, differing from her fellows only in her greater mobility and her somewhat sullen demeanor. The eleven-year-old grew confident, filling her days with her studies and her dancing and, inevitably, the contemplation of her Role in the larger Painan scheme of things; contemplation as confusing as it was arduous. Lord Julius had, even in those earliest years of his reign, adopted many of the singular and eccentric policies and programs for which he is much-noted and shall be long-remembered across the length and breadth of Estarcion; seemingly-mad, random and capricious changes piled one upon the other, 'til only the Master Politician himself was able to perceive the Ordered Center within the Ubiquitous Chaos. Nowhere was this better exemplified than in his dealings with his own family in the Great Dining Hall of the Executive Mansion. There, in that immense and glittering room, each evening, was met a titanic struggle amongst the several hundred relations (each clinging to his Tavers surname, the Guarantor of *Entreé*) which was no less violent and hysterical for the decorous and civilised manner with which it was conducted. Weary of the usual intrigues and skullduggery common to so large a Court (or *any* family, come to think of it), Lord Julius had seized upon the notion, early in his career as Grandlord, that he would be better-served by instituting a seating arrangement which changed nightly. It was an inspired innovation. The energies which might otherwise have found release in jockeying for position or the defense of captured territories were expended instead in a ritualized assessment of one's own and one's neighbours' positions. Once aware of the 'rules' of the seating game, Jaka herself became adept at recognizing the range of expressions endemic to the Seating Arrangement Players. The wide-eyed and trembling euphoria of the Extravagantly Promoted (those persons who, over the course of several evenings, had leapfrogged their way across a dozen or more tables and now found themselves within sight of the *Head* Table and the dark-haired gentleman with the painted mustache at its center), the Incrementally Promoted (intent and predatory individuals whose progress was like that of chess pawns; place-setting by place-setting), the Immobile (persons of vacant gaze and an artificial serenity which fooled no one, least of all themselves), the Tread-Mill People (features etched with dismay, they found themselves, evening after evening, rotating, carousel-like, about a single table), the Incrementally Demoted (closely resembling their Promoted Cousins but with an air of quiet desperation that grew nearly palpable as they receded, place-setting by place-setting, like tides from the shore) and, lastly, the Extravagantly Demoted (those of near-catatonic visage, their anticipation of a final descent into the outer reaches too terrible to contemplate and, consequently, objects of irresistible curiousity to one and all).

Jaka, on the other hand, though she seldom had the same chair twice, was never seated further from her Uncle than the second row of tables and, in this, she was unique; a fact which accounted for the venemous envy and loathing with which she was regarded by her relatives. Her position in the Great Dining Hall was secure and its proximity to the head table a matter of a few meters. As she came to this realization, her eyes swept the Head Table, settling at last on a young cadet and his father (a military commander of great standing) and their positions a mere six place-settings removed from Lord Julius.

She chewed an under-cooked bit of vegetation thoughtfully and later, as the duo departed, she made note of the doorway through which they exited.

POUR MOI?
HOW CHARMING...
WHAT DOES SHE HAVE TO SAY?
I DON'T KNOW. IT'S IN LOWER FELDAN
MWAHAW HAWHAW
'BEAUCOUP D'ARGENT'!
C'EST MAGNIFIQUE!
VRAIMENT.

DEAR BOY, YOU CAN TELL YOUR LOVELY WIFE THAT I SHALL BE BRINGING MORE 'ARGENT' WITH ME THAN OLD MAN WITHERS HAS SEEN IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS...
MORE WHAT?
CURRENCY, DEAR BOY.
'FILTHY PAPER' AS THE HSIFANS CALL IT...
EEEEE
SUCH CONCERN FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THAT BEETLE-BROWED PHILISTINE...
=SIGH=
AH, WELL SUCH IS THE LIFE OF AN ARTISTE
HALF DIVINE INSPIRATION
HALF MUNDANE CHARADE
IN ANY EVENT YOU MAY INFORM HER THAT I WILL COMPLY WITH HER WISHES
TO THE LETTER.
I'LL TELL HER
AND RICHARD
UH-HUH?
NOT A WORD TO HER ABOUT 'JAKA'S STORY'
DON'T WORRY.

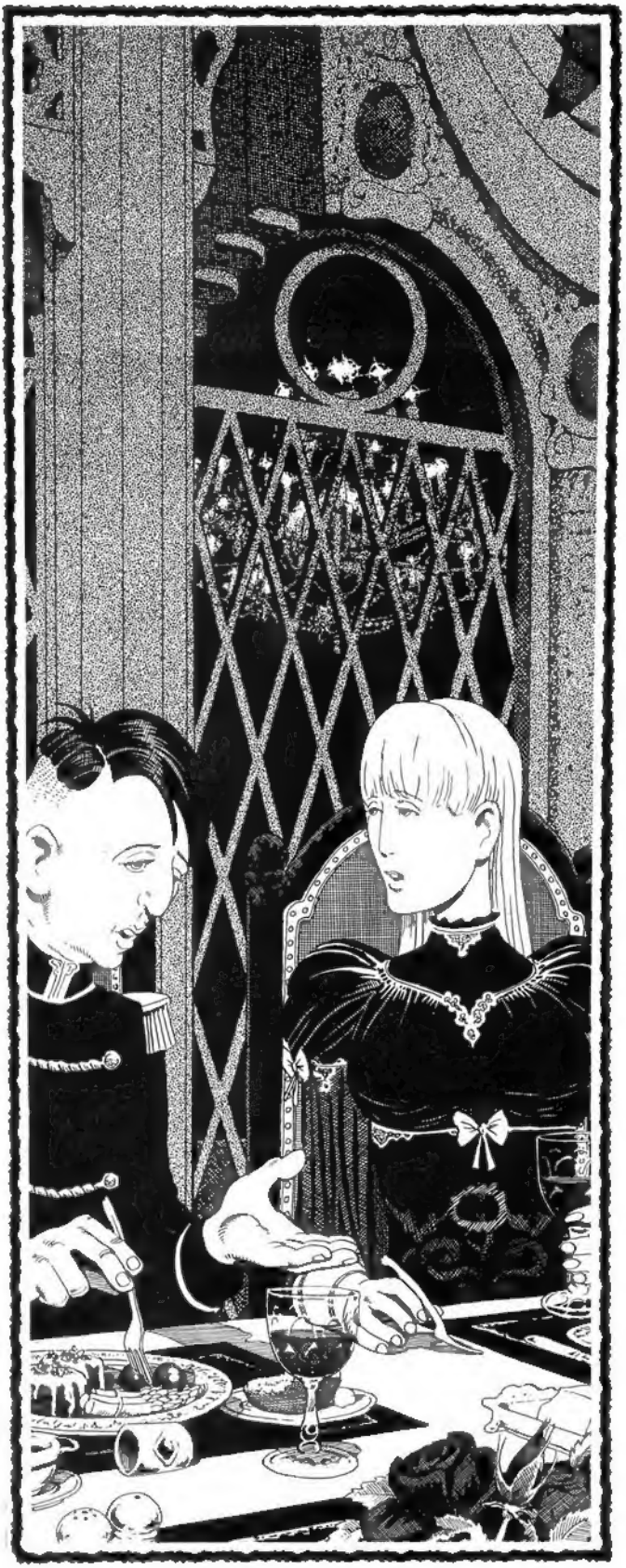
THE NEXT EVENING she positioned herself within that doorway, resplendent in a new black velvet dress, the bodice of which contained many measures of crumpled tissue for each measure of eleven-year-old bosom (Jaka's newest discovery was her Clothing Allowance of which she had been unaware and the parameters of which she now sought to establish, dress upon dress, skirt upon skirt, blouse upon blouse, jacket upon jacket. The fact that the Allowances Administrator had yet to so much as bat one puffy, red-rimmed eye over Jaka's purchases filled the young girl with such a vertiginous feeling as she had not felt since crossing the floor of the Hidden Room). At first sight of her quarry, she waylaid him with a light touch on his arm. She entered into her carefully-rehearsed speech; how *fascinated* she was to meet someone in Real Cadet Training; what a *shame* it was that they had so little time to talk about Real Cadet Training; her *certainty* that he must be a veritable fount of wisdom on the subject of Real Cadet Training; how she *wished* it were possible to trade places (just for tonight) with his father so that she might endeavour to learn as much as possible about Real Cadet Training over dinner. Quite dizzy with this unsolicited female attention (and bedazzled by the curve of her tissue-enhanced bodice) Cadet First Class Christopher Ashby was persuasive indeed in swaying the better judgement of First Palnu Military Commander Hesketh Ashby to trade places with young Jaka (just for tonight). It might be added that the elder Ashby, having despaired of his somewhat moronic-looking son ever making a love-match (suitable or otherwise) and having determined that the young lady in question had the correct surname (and was, in fact, the niece of his Commander-in-Chief) he was not altogether innocent of motives ulterior.

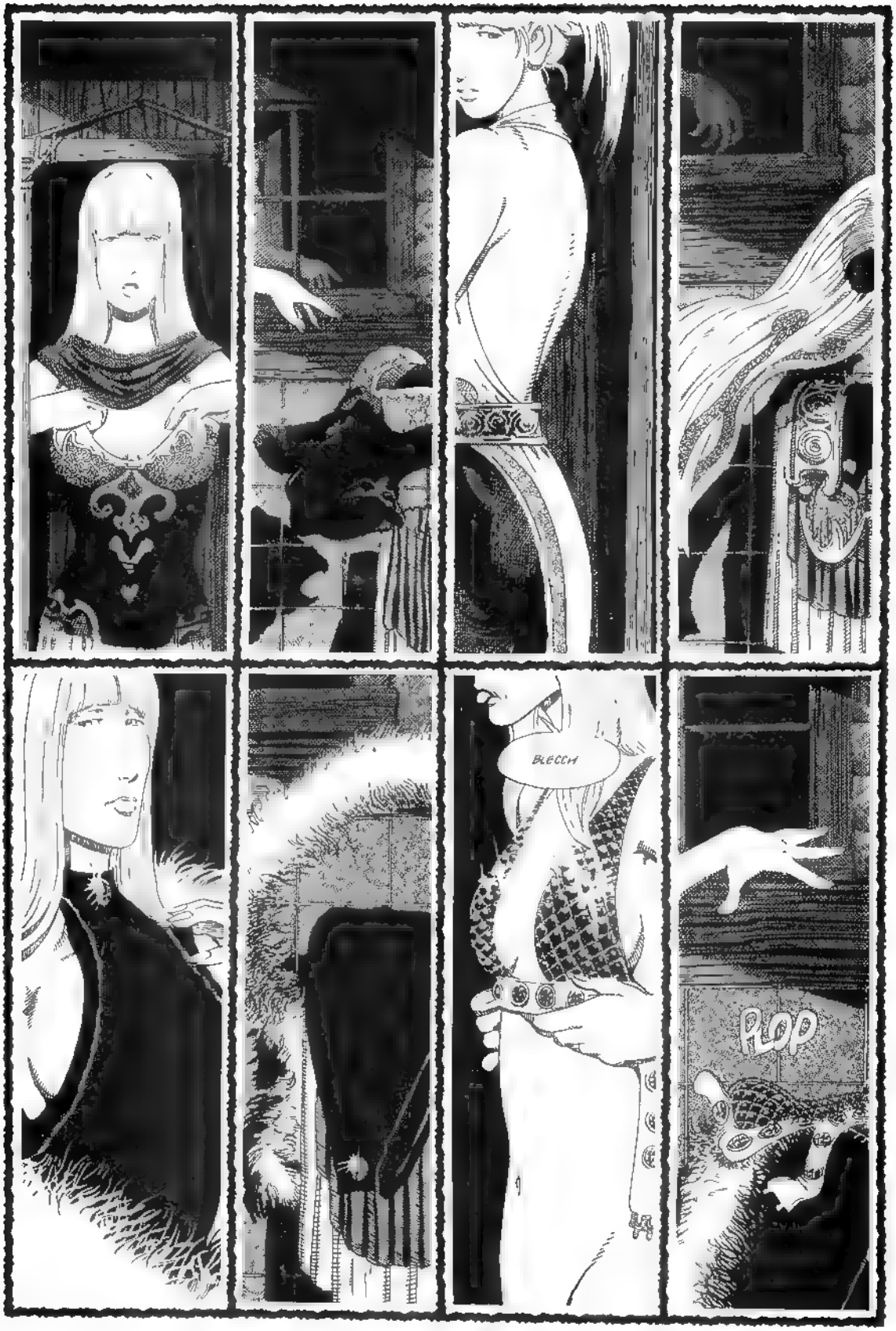
Too nervous to eat, sipping lightly from her glass of wine and water, Jaka became quickly oblivious to the monotonous, droning voice to her right. She tried repeatedly to catch the eye of her illustrious Uncle, but found herself unable, most of the time, even to see the back of his head, her view being obstructed by an impolitely-massive dinner companion to Lord Julius' immediate left. From time to time the monotonous drone would cease and she would say 'How fascinating. You must tell me more.' Gamely, Cadet First Class Christopher Ashby would endeavour to search out some hitherto undisclosed bit of intelligence regarding the cleaning of latrines; though it must be admitted that such an enterprise would tax the most earnest efforts of the most eloquent conversationalist. By the third assertion of 'How fascinating. You must tell me more,' Cadet First Class Ashby had begun to suspect his fiancée-to-be of harbouring decidedly unsavoury interests and, his tunic soaked through with perspiration, he excused himself, adjourned to the nearest lavatory and there pondered, for the first time, the complexities of social intercourse with a member of the opposite gender.

He returned after a short time and launched immediately into a breathless monologue, the subject of which was Close Order Drill (in spite of her, he intended to keep their relationship on a lofty and moral plane). She responded admirably as he paused to refill his lungs; 'How fascinating. You must tell me more.'

The meal came to an end without Lord Julius once noticing his niece who was now certain that she would soon (one way or another) take up permanent residence on the Dais of Honor, to his immediate right, as a kind of Grand Hostess or Grand Young Lady of Palnu.

For his part, First Cadet Christopher Ashby was well-pleased with this first meal with his bride-to-be, attributing her abrupt and wordless departure in mid-anecdote to pre-nuptial jitters.




BLECCH
PLOP

O DANSEUSE BRILLANT
MILLE PARDONS
NE VOUS EN FAIS PAS
ENCHANTÉ
FIFTY CROWNS, WITHERS, IF I HAVE A GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE IN MY HAND BEFORE ANOTHER THIRTY SECONDS HAS ELAPSED..
ZIP!
FANKLIN
BUP BUP BUP
CHAMPAGNE FOR EVERYONE!
SHAMPANE?!
WHAR'S MA LE MUG?!

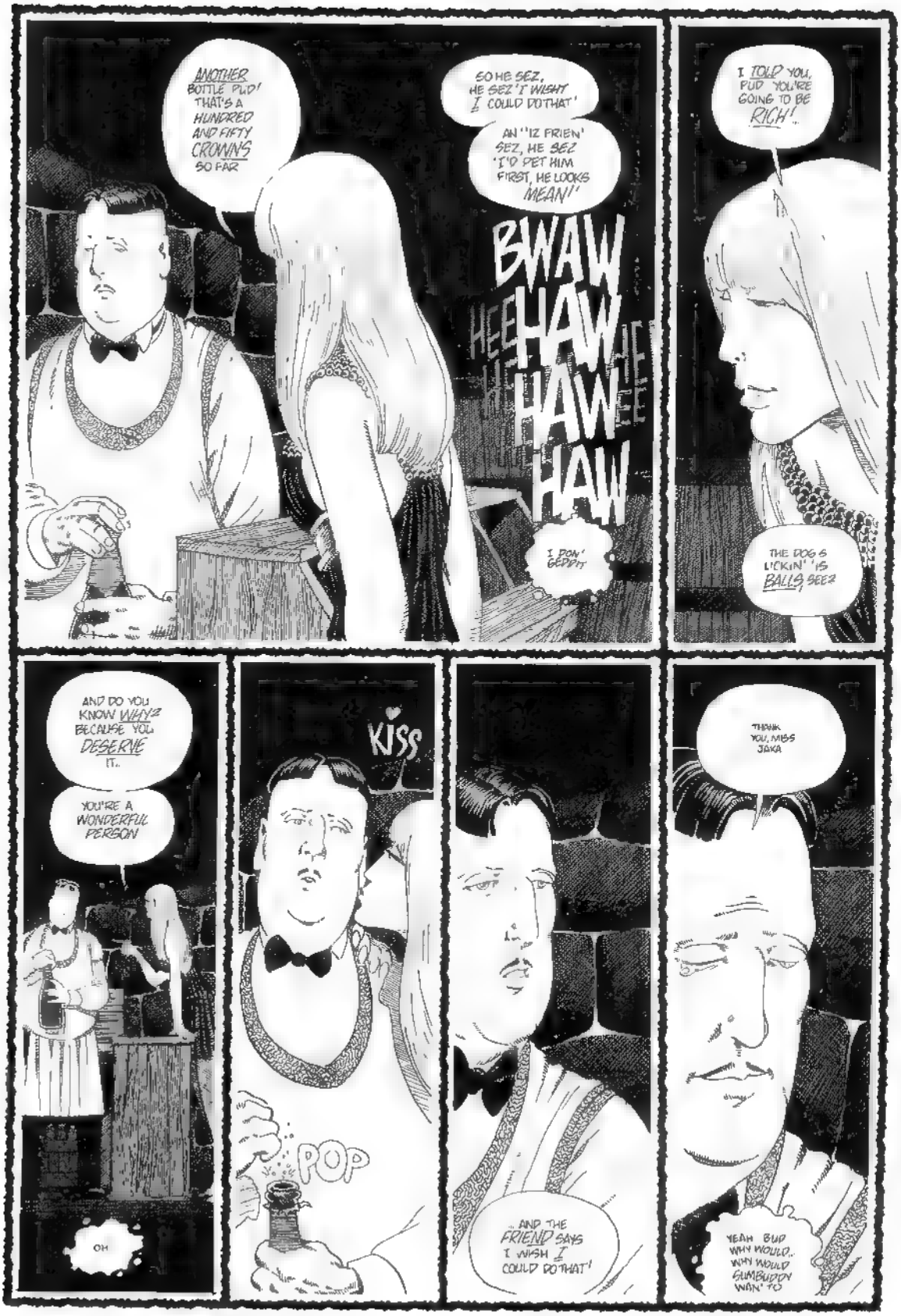
MM
P'HAPS NOT
M'HMM HMM

OH OF COURSE THE IESTAN REGULARS 'SHINING JEWELS OF THE PAPAL CROWN .. EACH MAN A LION'S HEART' AS THE SAYING WENT
'A LION'S HEART'
=HEEHEE= I AIN'T HEERD THAT IN TWENNY YEARS
THESE ITTY BITTY GLASSES DON'T HOLD MUCH DO THEY?
OH RIGHTEOUS BLOOD WITH N OUR VEINS'
TINK
'PLRE FELDAN HEARTS, NOT PASSIONS FEIGNED'
'GAINST KINGS AN NOBLES TITLED REIGNS'
'TARIM'S WILL, OUR SACRED GAIN'
?
YE KNOW TH' REG'LAR'S OATH! WELL I'LL BE HORN-SWOGGLED!

CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP

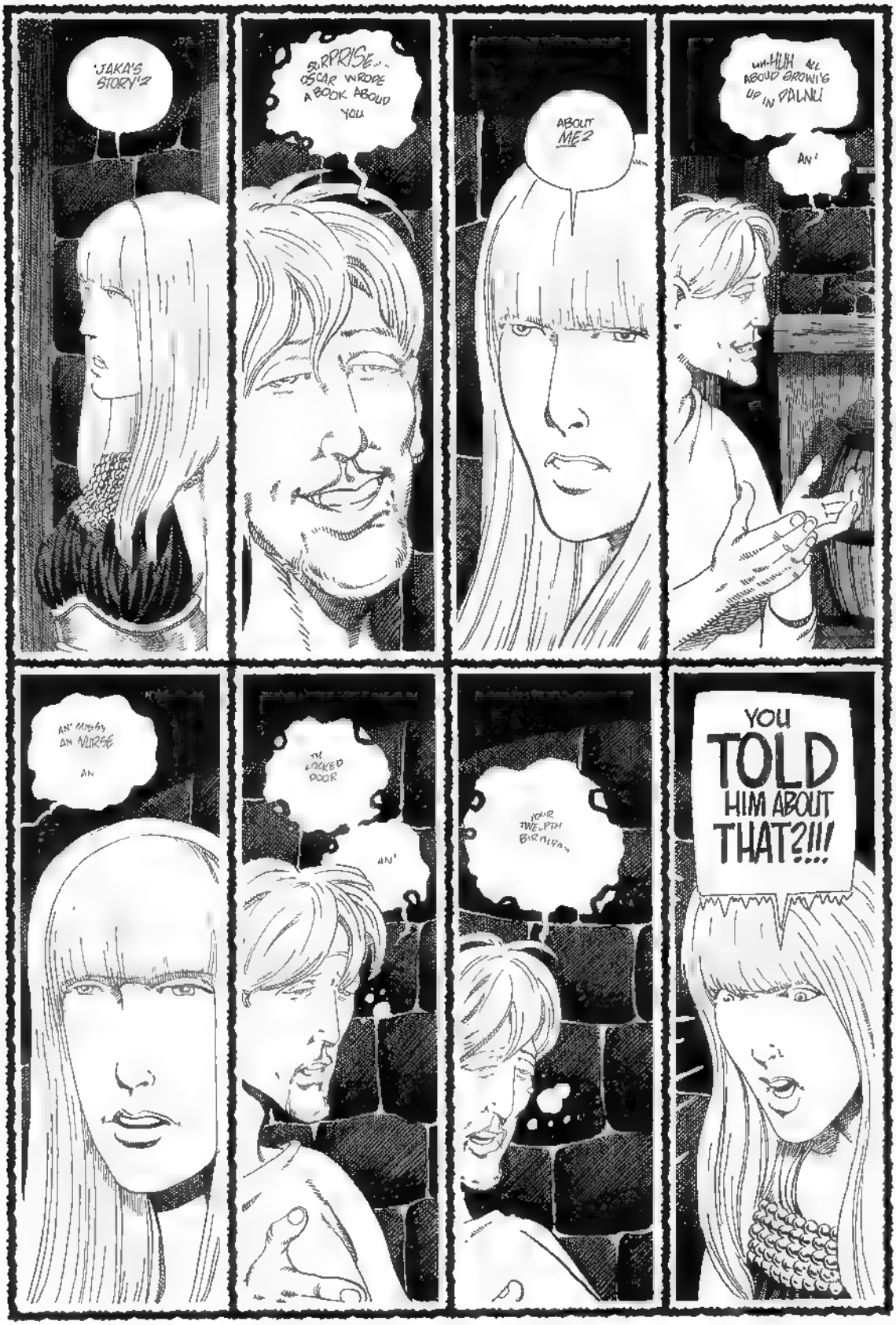
SAY, SONNY-- 'AVE YE GOT ONE O' THEM SMOKES T' SPARE?
OH! OF COURSE
HOW NEGLECTFUL OF ME NOT TO HAVE OFFERED YOU ONE SOONER
THEY'RE TAINTED WITH OPIUM...
HOW'S THAT?!
I SAID THEY'RE TAINTED WITH OPIUM...
YE HAVE TA SPEAK UP, SONNY!
I SA.D 'THEY'RE VERY GOOD'
CLICK
WAL! LET'S FIRE ONE UP AN' GIVE 'ER A TRY!
WAH

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP


ANOTHER BOTTLE PUD! THAT'S A HUNDRED AND FIFTY CROWNS SO FAR
SO HE SEZ, HE SEZ 'I WISHT I COULD DO THAT'
AN "IZ FRIEN' SEZ, HE SEZ 'I'D PET HIM FIRST, HE LOOKS MEAN!'
BWAW HEEHAW HEE HAW HEE HAW
I DON' GEDDIT
I TOLD YOU, PUD YOU'RE GOING TO BE RICH!
THE DOG'S LICKIN' 'IS BALLS, SEE?
AND DO YOU KNOW WHY? BECAUSE YOU DESERVE IT.
YOU'RE A WONDERFUL PERSON
OH
KISS
POP
AND THE FRIEND SAYS I WISH I COULD DO THAT!
THANK YOU, MISS JAKA
YEAH BUD WHY WOULD.. WHY WOULD SUMBUDDY WAN' TO

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

FRIENDS...
I CAWN'T RECALL WHEN I HAVE SO ENJOYED AN EVENING'S ENTERTAINMENT!
IT SEEMS A PITY TO ALLOW SO ENCHANTED...
...AND ENCHANTING...
AN OCCASION TO SLIP AWAY FROM US
TO FORESTALL THAT UNHAPPY INEVITABILITY
I MUST DEPART FOR A MOMENT
AND WHEN I RETURN....
...WITH EVERYONE'S KIND INDULGENCE
I SHOULD BE PLEASED TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH A RECITATION OF EXTRACTS FROM MY NEWEST LITERARY CREATION ...
JAKA'S
STORY.


'JAKA'S STORY'?
SURPRISE... OSCAR WROTE A BOOK ABOUT YOU
ABOUT ME?
UH-HUH ALL ABOUT GROWIN' UP IN PALN'L
AN'
AN' MISSY AN NURSE
AN
TH LOCKED DOOR
AN'
YOUR TWELFTH BIRTHDAY
YOU TOLD HIM ABOUT THAT?!!!

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Mr. Sim (sounds like one of these cheap '30s crime melodramas, doesn't it. I suppose you get that sort of shit all the time. sorry).

In writing this letter, I am reminded of a joke that was told to me recently It is as follows "Q: What does riding a Japanese motorcycle have in common with masturbation? A: They both feel really great until someone catches you in the act " Now, I wish to point out that (a) I have absolutely *no* quarrel against the Japanese (short of their appalling whaling habits) or their products, and that (b) I do not wish to avow *any* interest whatsoever in motorcycling (for I have none). Nevertheless, I feel that the above analogy applies equally well (if somewhat perversely) to your letters page, in that it is a source of unutterable joy to read the column, so as to receive (vicariously) one of your *bon mots*, edicts or plain old insults (I do not wish to appear sarcastic; reading the column is almost as good as reading the novel itself Truly.), but unfortunately, no self-respecting person would be caught dead with his or her name emblazoned therein, it being populated, for the greater part, by very odd people.

Having gotten all that tripe off my chest (and no, I don't think there was a point to any of it). I would simply like to express my deep thanks and admiration for your novel Speaking as an *ingenu* (I first heard of your novel a year ago, just finished reading parts 58-120 for the first time a week ago, and put a lay-by on reprints 1-25 yesterday. What a hero.), I cannot help but marvel (Marvel? Did someone say Marvel?) at the efforts of both you and the sartorially elegant Gerhard to weave such a world of intricacy, complexity and power (do you feel I'd be better off writing blurbs for cheap paperbacks? I've obviously missed my calling somewhere along the line).

Your distribution problems, your hustling rivals, your girlfriend problems (belated commiserations, by the way Zolastraya is an incredibly cool name for a girlfriend. My, what a mature summation of the relationship.), your excruciating con appearances and your psychopathic fans may get you down sometimes (or even often - don't worry, by the way, the end of this sentence is only a colon, 2 parentheses and 4 commas away), but, for what it's worth, I will offer this (hopefully) consoling opinion: in decades to come, 'comic' art will be acknowledged as *the* major innovative art form of the late 20th century And, along with the Milters, Sienkewicz' and Wagners, *your* names Messrs. Sim and Gerhard, will be rightly placed as pillars of reference and reverence. And *no-one* will know who in the fuck Jeanette Kahn was. So ner.

Sorry about the Wagnerian length (and sentence size). Do come to Australia sometime. I'd enjoy shouting you dinner somewhere

Yours faithfully,

Mathew Bates
33 Park Street
Hawthorn 3122
Victoria Australia

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave -

I'd been trying to delve up an idea for a single page. Today it came, but I remembered you're booked So we can't waste a good Pekar-style vignette, and can't pass up the opportunity to toss off a "just-listening-to-the-Stones, thought-I'd-write-Dave" letter (Lor' knows I've tried my hand!)

Awright! Bout six weeks ago I'd gotten to know a girl I'd particularly fancied from afar. Whom I adored more than I've ever adored anyone. Had all these dreamy fantasies and just couldn't wait to nudge them along, as everything was Grrr-oovy. And it seemed as if she liked me, right? Oh, November 1989 was fabulous - the loveliest, coolest chick I know actually digs me! Bitchin!

Well, circumstances changed so that I hadn't seen her in 2-1/2 weeks 'till tonight. And for the usual mysterious reason, she'd suddenly switched and ceased to be sociable Said I shouldn't like her, there was nothing between us, "can't it just be casual?" Imagine my fragile heart dropped from 30,000 feet. Picture pitiful me reduced to nothing. Second thought, don't. It ain't pretty.

Oh, was I blue (still am). Decided to buy an album. Got the new Miles Davis ("Aura") to get real blue. Just wallow in it, y'know. It didn't work. Wasn't blue enough, or wasn't immediately blue. I needed a rouser, a rocker to share my self-pity. Put on "Steel Wheels" which I'd bought last week and had barely listened to. Awright! Gettin' better! Til halfway through "Sad Sad Sad", I belted across my lonely room to Mick. "Yeah? Who are you to talk? You got Jerry Hall!" (Aren't you glad I didn't inflict *that* upon 12 panels?)

So. I almost felt like replacing the Stones with Joe Williams ("Nobody loves me ... nobody seeeems to care") but, super-model girlfriends or not, the Glimmer Twins are really helping at the moment. And, no, don't worry, fans, I'll be A-OK! (But send money in lieu of flowers, k?)

Oh yeah. Last two issues (124 & 125) have been tits. Big time tits. There's been talk about the nothing-going-onedness in *Cerebus*, like Don Thompson's recent review, but I don't get it My favourite issues have been those that do not propel the storyline in the least. (Change that to "do the least to propel the storyline" the off issues do move). Like the Roach parodies, Mick & Keef, Seth & Marks, the Carrot, etc. I won't give in to complimentary analysis, but whether you go for stretched drama, quick wit, or this current exciting boredom, its entertaining, Dave, m'man Good show.

Yours implicitly,

Al McCarty
P O Box 2720
Minneapolis, MN
55402

P.S. I shoulda brought this up in June, but my copy of *Cerebus* came unglued almost immediately. Any chance I could get a replacement? Krazy Glue ain't workin' man!

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Sometimes I get a little mixed up. If I see a number 1 (one), I'll replace it with a letter I (eye), and vice versa. This also commonly happens with the number 0 (zero), and letter O (oh). Can you relate to how embarrassing it would be to read "Your grandma (hi grandma) is 100 (one hundred)?", but reading "Your grandma is eyeoow?"

Have you ever noticed a Z (zed or zee) can also closely resemble a 2 (2, two)? how 'bout S (es) and a sloppy

5 (five)? Just thought I'd bring it to your attention.

Too Mature To Say Fuck You (etc) in a letter.

Curt Sparkes

P.S. This is my first letter to a comic so please print it as I might get discouraged.

P.P.S. Does Gerhard have a last name?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Well, it's time to do those damn New Year's Resolutions again. Every year I make a whole bunch and then I always break them. How do *you* fit in with all this, you ask? Glad you asked. You see, if I put all of my Resolutions in a letter to you, and you printed it, then I'd be naturally obliged to uphold them because, damnit, they'd be in print then, and legally binding. So here they are, Dave.

1. I WILL STOP PERFORMING LIPOSUCTION ON THE CATS

(I mean, damn, they're not *that* fat, and the fur hides all the cellulite anyway. The only reason I keep doing it is because I'm perverse and that's got to stop.)

2. I WILL NOT SPEND MY SPRING BREAK PRETENDING TO BE CLARK GABLE AGAIN

(That was a very bad period in my life and I just cracked a little under the anxiety. No repeats.)

3. I WILL NOT APPEAR MORE THAN TWICE ON THE PHIL DONAHUE SHOW

(No matter how nicely he asks.)

4. I WILL NOT LET CASSANDRA THE WITCH BE MY LOVE SLAVE

(Unless she says please, which she won't)

5. I WILL STOP MAILING IRANIANS HATE MAIL WITH RONALD REAGAN'S RETURN ADDRESS ON IT

(It all started as a joke, really, but it's caused permanent damage to our foreign policy, and while it's probably too late to make amends, I can at least keep things from getting worse.)

6. I WILL BE A STRAIGHT A STUDENT

(Parental throwaway resolution)

7. I WILL STOP TRYING TO HAVE SEX WITH CAROL GIOZUINDO

(It's high time I realized that, no matter *how* much she flirts with me, it will never get that far. Probably.)

So that's it. Follow these seven simple guidelines and any old dreg like myself can be a wonderful human being, I guess. Sorry I didn't type this letter and I'm sorry that your building is being torn down. That is really (pardon my Beduinese) shitty.

Sincerely,

Jeremy "I was born in a taxicab" Bushnell

1120 Bristol Rd.
Warminster, PA
18947

P.S. Will Oscar meet Salman Rushdie? Should I grow a mustache? Why did I write this and will you print it?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I have wanted to write since issue #51 but assumed I'd have to try to be witty and/or funny. (I'm ashamed to say I actually considered asking why the musk wrist shooters didn't discharge when Cerebus makes a fist.) But to hell with it. Cerebus is terrific. As strictly a charcoal portraitist in an artistic community that worships only watercolors of plants, knickknacks on shelves, or (Oh Christ!) dilapidated barns "Afar in the fields", I fell immediately in love with your blend of black and white graphics and storytelling. I swear I remember Jaka from drawing class in college a few years ago, but that's the idea, isn't it?

Art Hullinger
Box 108, R.R. 6
Decatur, Illinois
62521

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

My son was just another average everyday avacado teen. One day I noticed he was acting very strangely. I also noticed he had been hanging around celery and carrots. Still, I thought nothing of it. Then, one day, I received a phone call. It was the worst possible news! I rushed to the hospital only to find my son lying immobile in bed. He had overdosed on salad dressing. Now my son is just a vegetable.

Mark Xenolith

P.S. Paragraphs can be fun.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Have you ever wondered where that pair of underwear by the side of the road came from? Or that sock, or that single mitten? But it's the undergarments that really have me puzzled.

Tigger

Beyond Bramelea

P.S. Keep up the boring work, it's so involving and exciting.

P.P.S. Smooch, Smack, Kiss, Kiss what a Bullshitter. But truthfully Jaka's Story is your best work yet. (Of course the next book will then be your best and then.

P.P.P.S. I want my personal reply!

★★★★★★★★★★

Yo, Dogballs.....

So when are you gonna do a MUNDEN'S BAR anyway?

Maybe the Regency Elf could stop by to buy Bob a beer.

– I still don't understand this poet dude. ... why would a guy wanna fuck another guy in the ass.

Latatore,

Ralph T. Kirkum

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave, Dave, Dave, Dave, Dave,

Dave,

Right. My first Final exam is in about four hours. Its biology. I've been studying for three days about evolution, survival of the fittest, etc. I've got so much in me ("It's not what you know, it's when you know it.") That I even shit Darwin. Wow.

Nice attitude, eh?

Oh, sure. But, my test being barely four hours away, what am I doing? Studying? Praying? Slitting my roomate's throat?

Nope. Not me. I'm sitting here trying to think up witty things to say in my FIRST EVER, REAL-LIVE FAN LETTER TO MR. DAVE "FUCK YOU" SIM!! Mom would be so proud.

Yes, it's true, my first letter. I'm a big boy, I can admit it. Hey, we're adults (presumably), right?

Right.

Fuck studying.

Y'know Dave ... I've been buying this comic/graphic novel/magazine/piece of shit (pick your euphemism) for nigh unto eight years now.

Shit I was thirteen then, and no one knew who the hell you or your little grey bastard were.

And now, here in the halls of higher education, no one still knows.

"Cerebus? Who?" They ask me. Chicks squeal over my stuffed Cerebus toy (this is not an euphemism, I promise.) But that is about the only reaction I get. I quote you in my mass communication and rhetorical analysis papers. All I get are little red "Who?"'s stencilled in the margins.

Dave,

Since I had no money when issue 123 was in stores, I couldn't buy it. I haven't been able to buy it since and I keep feeling I have missed out on something. By the way, I know this sounds stupid, but what is meant by "The Wilde, The Innocent and the Earth Pig Shuffle"?

Anyway, the New Year is nearly upon us, Dave. Some folks have some resolutions. Do you have any resolutions? Care to print any of 'em? Probably not so I have gone through the embarrassing task of writing up my own list of resolutions. Don't you wish all of your readers and fans did this, Dave? Here we go:

1) Get through the rest of my freshman year without killing myself and being able to pass all my classes at the same time.

2) Get my learner's permit without killing myself and maybe even buying a good used car should I be even able to find one.

3) Getting laid. What else?

4) Completing my Cerebus collection without killing my bank account.

5) Join the quartet in chorus.

6) Find a girl to fall in love with. Several candidates have been selected but they don't know about that.

Well, Dave, there are all my resolutions and I don't expect to keep any of them before the end of school is here, except for number three. What else? Yeah, I know it sounds pretty lame to have everybody who reads Cerebus know that I'm still a virgin. Well, at least I can become the pope. Well, maybe not.

Please bring back Mick n' Keef for at least one issue. It just wouldn't be a comeback year for the Stones without a Mick n' Keef issue. How about it, Dave? I leave it in your hands.

Alright, now for the time that I've been waiting for. Dave, a few weeks ago, my sister was lucky enough to have some of her letter printed in issue 68 of Grimjack. Now I know that Cerebus gets more letters than Grimjack and you have to check each letter to decide which gets printed and which gets the can. But Dave, after four letters, its about time that I get printed. Please, Dave. I'm beggin you. Print this letter. If not for me, than for the millions who never had the satisfaction of picking up a comic and savoring the fact of knowing that their letter was printed in that issue. Please.

Michael Todd Hagley

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Do you want to hear a story?

I'll mail it to you next week, if you do.

Andy Speer
141 Barbara Rd.
Waltham, MA
02154

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I have some things to write:

1. I have come to the conclusion that everything is alive and that this is the secret of the universe that everyone has been looking for.
2. I have convinced at least two of my friends that I am the messiah.
3. What's the best comic book store in Gainesville?

Simon Arthur
723 Park Ridge Circle
Port Orange, FL
32127

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave-

Since you're personally (or not) answering all of your mail, I got some questions:

1. Is Jaka's story based partly on a short story called "To Room 19" by Doris Lessing? Or another short story called "Flowering Judas"? I read these in an english class and they bear some resemblances to Jaka's story. If not, read them and see what you think.
2. Are you selling any original art? If so, do you have a list and prices?
3. When are you and Ger gonna show up at the San Diego Con again?
4. Is it just my friend Todd's imagination or is Pud's face getting thinner and more defined?

Always a pleasure reading the book. Thanks for listening and I hope to hear from you soon.

Best.

P.J. Wahlquist
2327 Reno Avenue
Las Vegas, NV
89119

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Please indulge me.

I have a good friend - Geoff Hickey - who is going to school at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY. He's beginning to get his life together and plan for the future. He recently asked me in a letter whether the world would be surprised if he decided to become a geologist. I, personally, would not be surprised at all, but how am I supposed to know what the rest of the world would think? I decided to ask random people at school and I surveyed a few dozen people (results were mixed). I asked Arlo Guthrie after a concert in Boston (he would not be surprised). Now it's your turn. Since you said that you'd answer every letter received within 2 weeks of shipping Cerebus #12, I figured that now would be a good time to ask you. This letter may have missed the two week deadline, but please respond anyway. It doesn't matter that you have no idea who Geoff Hickey is. Neither does most of the world. Just write down 'Yes' or 'No' under the question and put down your name/signature. Can you imagine - I'm not even asking for a sketch! Ask Gerhard whether he would be surprised or not. Ask Ms. Kaptein. Print this letter and ask your readers. Whatever.

Please answer the question on the next page and send it in the enclosed envelope back to me. (No stamp on the envelope because I have no Canadian postage).

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

Jonathan White
138 Worth Ave.
Hamden, CT
USA 06518

P.S. 'Jaka's Story' is great etc. etc. etc. ad nauseum I'm sure.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

(strehlow that is)

Listen dude, I think you went just a little too far looking for laughs. Insulting communists, masturbationists, sperm-birds and witches is one thing, but when you start picking on people without chins, you start looking to die.

I know a lot of really keen people without chins. And yeah, I'll admit to being one myself. All of us seem to have similar traits: All of us are creative, free-spirited, have dark blonde to brown hair, act like we're on drugs 24 hours a days for one reason or another, listen mostly to hard r&b based rock'n'roll, are crazy and most of us prefer graphic novels over comic books.

In short, we all rule. You people with chins are just here to amuse us. So shut up and get off your soap box. Or better yet, fall off and break your neck.

Cordially,

Charles Morley
P.O. Box 1266
Port Angeles, WA
USA 98362

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'The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.'

Oscar Wilde
preface
to "Picture of
Dorian Gray"